



The Case for the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement *Strengthening Partnerships for Prosperity*

"This agreement has strategic implications. It is very important for [the United States] to stand with democracies that protect human rights and human dignity; democracies based upon the rule of law."

-- President George W. Bush, May 2, 2007

More than 8,000 U.S. companies export to Colombia, 84 percent of which are small and medium-sized firms.

Source: Latin America Trade Coalition

1. Open a significant new export market. America's two-way trade with Colombia reached \$16 billion in 2006, making Colombia our fifth largest trading partner in Latin America and our largest export market for U.S. agriculture products in South America. In 2006, total U.S. goods exports to Colombia reached \$6.7 billion. The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement will further open this dynamic and growing economy to American goods and services. It will provide particular benefits to U.S. farmers and ranchers by eliminating Colombia's duties on high quality beef, cotton, wheat, soybeans and many fruits, vegetables and processed foods immediately.

2. Level the playing field for American business, farmers, ranchers and workers. America's market is already open to imports from Colombia. In 2006, for example, 92 percent of U.S. imports from Colombia entered the United States duty-free under our most-favored nation tariff rates and various preference programs, such as the parties. Since President Uribe took office in 2002, Colombia has increased the size of its security forces and re-established a state presence in every municipality in the country. Uribe's strong approval ratings -- over 70 percent in recent polls -- shows that this sustained commitment to improving Colombia's record in very human rights and labor rights category is broadly shared in Colombia.

3. Strengthen peace, democracy, freedom and reform. In 2000, much of Colombia was controlled by three terrorist groups and ruthless narcotics trafficking cartels. With U.S. assistance and trade preferences under ATPA, the Colombian people are transforming their nation. They have achieved solid progress in economic growth, social development, and in reducing violence and illegal activities. Murders are down 40 percent since 2002, kidnappings are down 75 percent, and terror attacks are down by 60 percent. The progress made is real but critical challenges remain. The terrorist and paramilitary groups are weakened but not defeated. Violence continues to threaten all sectors of Colombian society as well as cause displacement and economic hardship. The people of Colombia are addressing these problems aggressively and decisively, but need the continued help of the United States. This agreement is a critical tool to provide licit jobs and economic alternatives to violence. Colombia is a vibrant democracy, with a history of free elections, a free press, and solid opposition political parties. Since President Uribe took

office in 2002, Colombia has increased the size of its security forces and re-established a state presence in every municipality in the country. Uribe's strong approval ratings -- over 70 percent in recent polls -- shows that this sustained commitment to improving Colombia's record in very human rights and labor rights category is broadly shared in Colombia.

4. Promote economic growth and poverty reduction. An increasingly open market has given Colombia the tools to fight corruption and increase transparency and the rule of law. Through continued U.S. assistance and approval of the agreement, Colombia can become a self-sufficient partner in the region, free of violence able to derive the full benefits of the global economy, and can join the growing partnership of countries along the Pacific coast of the Americas to solidify open markets and strengthen democracy in the region. The increased economic activity will create additional jobs and opportunities in the formal sector and will positively influence Colombia's efforts to reduce poverty. Growth has averaged 5.2 percent since 2002 (6.8 percent in 2006); poverty has declined from 60 percent in 2000 to 45 percent in 2006; Net foreign investment (flow) has nearly quadrupled from \$2.3 billion in 2002 to \$8.9 billion in 2006.

5. Anchor longstanding ties with a vital regional ally. Colombia has been a steadfast partner in combating narcotics trafficking and countering regional terror groups. The Colombian people support the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement in large numbers. An InVamer-Gallup Poll published in El Tiempo May 4, found Uribe's approval rating was pegged at 75 percent. The Colombian Congress voted 55 to 3 in favor of the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement showing that the Colombian people are confident that stronger ties to the U.S. will make them more secure, stable and prosperous. Approval and implementation of the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement will be a critical signal of America's support for the Colombian people, who have chosen to strengthen ties with the United States in the belief that reciprocal market access will contribute to the overall growth and development of their nation.

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